

CARTON 135

W. LECTURE

"THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE TODAY"

1974

SYMBIONESE LIBERATION ARMY (SLA)

2017/193

From CR to Blk Lib

1. Crisis of mvmt today

- collapse of manr orgs & mass struggles
- lack of national leadership
- lack of perspective on what to do
- spread of ~~xxx~~ small grp "guerrillas" Weatherpeople, SLA

SLA

2. Hystefia around SLA has deflected people from analyzing situation

Mvmt

- tend to line up "for" or "agin" SLA
- Media have stirred racism and sympathy for Hearst family
- community people generally confused abt SLA; also confusion in mvmt
- I think SLA represents reaction to continuing economic and social deterioration and oppression; and failure of left leadership and mass mvmt.

individual ack us mass struggle

3. How did this problem in mvmt develop?

- CR mvmt had important mass victories: ending of legal segregation; passage of voting rights law; more blk pol. representation

- However, CR mvmt mainly middle-class in ldrshp and political orientation

- Hence, could be co-opted; with blk middle-class being tunred into a buffer grp. neo-colonialism example of blk capitalism

- militant groups like SNCC and Panthers attacked (mention FBI memos)

- Blk student and Blk Studeis mavmtn undercut by harassment, financial cut-backs, resurrection of frats and sors.

CR did not attack econ. problems

4. What direction today?

- development of study grps to analyze past actions (must combine study and practice)

integration is not racial equality

modest core

Middle East & oil
UN human rights
monetary crisis

Anti-imperialism

- must regain international perspective
(many confused by Paris peace agreement)
Mention Africa Liberation Day as
showing people connection between
multi-national corps exploiting Africa
and workers in US

Mention Bay Area waterfront demo

Mention Boycott of Gulf Oil

hardship

Danger of cynicism

- Economic crisis is developing political
consciousness of US people. Spontaneous
consumer boycotts, wildcat walkouts, etc.

This must become organized and strong link
must be developed between community
struggles and workplace struggles, since need
of people who are concerned abt these things

Mention United Black Workers in N.J.

(auto wrks)

Mention Fightback in NYC

Construction wrks

Mention Blk Workers Ctr in S.F.

Cab drivers

Example of this kind of organizing
perspective seen in film "Finally Got
the News."

rank + file caucuses

— internal democracy

— anti-racist

— better wages & working conditions

Unity of life
theory, community
& workplace

Mount today

SLA (chronology)

murder of RFK now

Kidnap of P. Hearst

(see other notes)

and with discussion of expressions & mount problems

~~collapsing~~ Weakening of ^{mass} mount on 1970's (after ^{early victories} of CR)

Persecution of SWCC, B/H Deacons later 1960's

(Watergate revelations show this was deliberate plan)

Cooption of B/H studies,

Black capitalism con game

confusion of anti-war mount after years of struggle in Vietnam

Strategy was to separate student movement from Dept. "professionalism" to co-opt & pull out from cultural curriculum (Dewey)

image replaces substance

Regeneration of mount? (this last response to SLA challenge)

1. continuing econ crisis developing consciousness

(esp. "famine" energy crisis)

Wildcat strikes in campuses

Black Worker center, NY conference

2. ~~Response to~~ study groups to assess mount & strategy

3. Response to Africa war, ALD

Anti-imperialist conf, Gulf Boycott

Bay Area Demonstration

insat boycott truckers

Need for national mass mount

with Workingclass base & leadership

& international perspective

The Liberation Struggle Today

1. Is the movement dead?

- collapse of many orgs & mass struggles
- lack of national leadership
- lack of a perspective on what is to be done

2. Is the movement going haywire?

- ~~— airline hijackings in early 1970s~~
- Weatherman bombers
- airline hijackings
- SLA "terrorism"

Want to take up some of these questions
in this discussion

Will begin with SLA since this is
on everybody's mind today.

SLA

Chronology

1. Totally unknown group, in mumt. Only one alleged member had mumt ties
2. First act of SLA was to assassinate Oakland school superintendent Marcus Foster last Nov.
Later sent a letter calling Foster an enemy of the people and promising further actions
— This created confusion in the community since Foster was not especially hated in the community
Most grps said he would at least listen to their idea
— also SLA said they would kill witnesses, and this ~~has~~ turned some people against them
3. SLA members accidentally captured, both white
4. Kidnap of Patricia Hearst on Feb 4th. Later sent letter demanding \$70 in food for all poor people in Calif. equivalent to \$400 million
This later modified to "do what you can as gesture of goodwill."
5. Hearst has now put up \$2 million for free food distribution plan called "People in Need" based on Washington State plan of Boeing Aircraft cut backs (probably tax deductible). This amounts to $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% of original demand. Press claims it will provide food to 100,000 people
(amounts to \$20 per person)
SLA has demanded \$4 million more

SLA

Response to SLA

1. Confusion among people in communities.

People will accept food but many are alienated or hostile to SLA since they are unsure what it represents. Lack of broad-based support

— No defense comm. for captured SLA members. Remains little

2. Media response

— Tremendous outpourings of sympathy for Hearst Family; "Ballad of Patty Hearst"

~~distorted~~ Hearst one of most reactionary & racist families in U.S. history. Hearst ^{newspapers} promoted U.S. intervention in Cuba in 1898. opposed labor organizing & labor legislation of 1930s. opposed any progressive steps made by blacks and Mexican-Americans

— Racism of media. Attempted to say killers of Porter were black, but 2 whites have been charged. Attempted to connect SLA with San Francisco murders in which blacks were supposedly the attackers. Claim that 2 black convicts are leaders of SLA, but there are no warrants for their arrests

Media have portrayed SLA as black conspiracy against white establishment but know SLA members (perkins) are all white. not to say blacks not involved, but racism rampant

3. Movement Response

- initially condemned SLA for its violence; even called SLA enemies of the people & counter-revolutionary
(Police Agents involved?)
- However, when SLA sent letter demanding free food distributions, then many who had condemned them offered to help with the food distribution or help in negotiations between SLA & Dearest family.
Some sought to make political capital out of SLA demands
opportunism of left

SLA represents (in my view)

1. ~~Contrary~~ A response to continuing oppression & exploitation of third world & poor people in this country — in communities, in factories, in prisons, in schools, etc.

SLA seems sincerely concerned with helping poor people

2. SLA ~~represents~~ ^{shows} lack of development & lack of leadership in the liberation struggle.

SLA modelled (perhaps) on Tupamaros of Latin America, but they are not based in a mass movement. In fact, I think lack of

a strong mass movement with progressive leadership
is what allowed SLA to develop.

They felt there was no alternative
but to engage in these kinds of individual,
terrorist acts against establishments.

— Compare with Russian terrorist before
Revolution of 1917

[is not violence but]

— Real weakness of SLA actions is that
they do not mobilize people to seize power.
Instead they confuse people, and create
illusion that a small group can change
society. Revolution by proxy

But the history of revolutionary struggles
shows that people must be organized
to act for themselves. Nobody can
give us freedom, we must take it for
ourselves.

(Conditions)

II What made SLA possible?

General weakness and disorganization of liberation struggle in recent years
How did this come about?

We all know movement used to be strong

1. In early and middle 1960s a mass movement was organized among black people and this movement achieved some important victories

— the ending legalized segregation, and the opening up of public facilities and a few jobs for blacks

— passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965. This latter opened the way for election of more black politicians to office

2. Problem was the CR movement was controlled by and mainly benefited b/k middle class.

The b/k middle class steered clear of radicalism (attacking the system) and the question of class struggle. Instead b/k middle class in effect offered itself as a buffer gap between black community and white power structure

— neo-colonialism

Refer to Black Awakening book

3. Consequently, ~~power~~ ^{power} structure was able to isolate and attack radical groups such as SNCC & Black Panthers in late 1960s. SNCC was eliminated, and BP was attacked by police departments around the country, and almost destroyed. At this time BP said there was a national conspiracy to destroy them. Many people did not believe this. But because of the Watergate investigation we now know that there was in fact a national conspiracy by the FBI to destroy black militant and other progressive orgs in this country.)
BP abandoned mass campaigns for electoral politics

4. While militants were ^{legally +} physically attacked a sop was offered to the black middle class
→ This was Black Capitalism
was supposed to create jobs & capital in black community.

In fact, it ~~was~~ ^{meant} mainly PR and profits for large white banks and corporations that supported Nixon's black capitalism program
(Explain MESBICS)

5. ~~Co-optation~~ ^{Weakening of} Black Studies Programs

This originally one of major successes of black student movement. Black studies was supposed to provide (1) a base of support and (2) the intellectual tools necessary to carry on the struggle

However, The tactics to castrate Black Studies have been

- (1) Separate student movement from Black Studies Depts in name of "professionalism" ^{split students}
- (2) Separate politics from culture in the Black studies curriculum. (~~Swahili~~ ^{African place} is okay, but courses on black ^{liberation} politics & economics are knocked out)
- (3) Budget cutbacks in black studies
Cutbacks in financial aid for black students
(In 1973 black student enrollment in colleges actually declined)

6. Confusion in anti-war movement after Paris Peace treaty for Vietnam.
- Movement lost its international perspective

7. ~~Media~~ Mass media, especially TV & films, have promoted the image or illusion of change (more black faces)

These are some of the factors that undermined the movement.

III The ^{mass} movement, or liberation struggle, has been weakened by these blows, but it has not been killed or crippled. In the last year or so I think we can see evidence that the movement is being rejuvenated and rebuilt on a firmer foundation.

1. The economic crisis of this country is forcing a development of political consciousness among the people. We see this already in spontaneous consumer boycotts and wildcat strikes around the country. But these spontaneous actions must become organized and must be based on an understanding of what the economic crisis really is about.

— Read TBS editorial (Feb, 1974)

— Methods for this to come about include the formation of TW & Rank & File caucuses in unions to fight racism and (Black labor center in S.F.) boycotts. The solution to inflation is not to cut back but to increase production to meet people's needs & lower prices. This must become a demand of the labor movement (mention Seward's article)

— Hope N.Y. ~~that~~ Black labor conference this weekend will raise this demand

2. Must develop ~~our~~ analysis of American racism and American capitalism.
- study groups springing up ^{many} on Congress and in communities.

Must be careful that study does not become separated from action. We study in order to know what course of action to follow.

3. Must regain an international perspective. Our liberation struggle is part of a world-wide revolutionary process, against an international enemy. Multinational corporations exploit TW & black labor in U.S. (Gulf oil in Angola; runaway shops aimed at hurting U.S. workers and exploiting the workers)

Examples -

- African Liberation Day [60,000 in 1972
100,000 in 1973]
- Boycott of Gulf Oil
- African Solidarity Conference in Chicago last Fall
- Local actions

Bay Area Comm. on Africa picketing at Pier 23 last week. Similar actions elsewhere.

In sum, we need to revitalize
a national ^{mass} movement for liberation.

A movement that would be based on &
led by the working people of the black
& other exploited communities

A movement that would attack the underlying
economic problems that the middle class
CR movement left untouched.

A movement that would have an
international, anti-imperialist perspective.

* Need to save gains made by black student movement
& black studies

The CR movement represented an important step
forward, but now we must take the second
step. Now we must tackle the problem of
which class is to lead and which class is
to benefit from the process of social change

People want to know how to respond to the SLA
In my opinion, to rebuild the mass movement
for social change is the best and most
constructive response to the SLA. I don't think
there is any point to condemning the SLA or
discussing whether people should or should not
accept the food. Our job is to build

a true liberation army in this country which will mobilize millions of oppressed people, and enable them to seize control of their own destiny.

I think the people in the SCA would themselves welcome this ^{development} because it means that the ~~next time~~ ^{in the future when} some action is taken against the ruling class it won't just be a handful of individuals, but instead it will be an organized mass of people which will have the power to stop, once and for all, the kind of racism and exploitation that the Hearst family represents.

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